

WILDERNESS HIKING

Convict Lake

INYO National Forest



CONVICT LAKE TRAILHEAD

The trailhead is located approximately 7 miles south of Mammoth Lakes on Highway 395. Exit Highway 395 at the Convict Lake sign. Follow the road 2 miles west past the pack station and at the intersection, turn right towards the trailhead parking area. Overflow parking is available at the south end of the resort.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

HISTORY

Located on the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada, Convict Lake received its notorious namesake from an incident back in the heydays of the Eastern Sierra mining boom. In September 1871, twenty-nine residents of the Nevada State Penitentiary in Carson City broke out of their cells in a dramatic prison escape and fled for the remote hinterlands of the Eastern Sierra. Towards the end of the pursuit, only six of the original 29 escapees made it as far as Mono County. With a sheriff's posse en route and the interest of local Inyo and Mono county residents sparked, these remaining few men selected the narrow, isolated canyon just below Convict Lake as their hideout. The ordeal finally ended with the deaths of two of the posse members: Robert Morrison and Mono Jim. The latter was buried in the very canyon he was killed and the former now boasts a peak in the vicinity bearing his name: Mt. Morrison.

CONVICT CREEK TO LAKES MILDRED, GENEVIEVE, AND DOROTHY

The Convict Canyon trailhead provides access to the rugged backcountry areas of Dorothy, Mildred, and Constance Lakes. It is infrequently maintained and provides its travelers with a seldom seen side of the Eastern Sierra: metaphoric rocks, deep

canyons, cottonwood groves, and remote destinations. A rugged and steep trail, the route follows the north shore of Convict Lake, steadily ascending the V-shaped canyon. Within 3 miles from the trail's start, a hazardous stream crossing must be carefully negotiated. Approximately 2 miles from the crossing, serene Mildred Lake springs upon the visitor. Meanwhile, the trail continues to the right of the lakeshore, steeply climbing for another mile to a colorful and impressively large Dorothy Lake. Fishing and campsites are abundant in its vicinity, but for the more adventurous hikers, a trail fork near Dorothy's outlet offers a gateway to the ultimate destination: Lake Genevieve.

PLEASE pack out ALL trash and practice *leave no trace* hiking ethics while in the wilderness. A permit is required for all overnight stays in the wilderness; quotas are in effect May 1 – November 1. These quotas protect the wilderness resource and help us to provide a quality wilderness experience.

Mildred Lake: 5 miles one-way
Dorothy Lake: 6 miles one-way

MAPS

Tom Harrison: Mammoth High Country (topo)
USGS: Mt. Morrison 15 minute quad
USGS: Convict Lake 7.5 minute quad
USGS: Bloody Mtn. 7.5 minute quad

GUIDEBOOKS

The Murders at Convict Lake by George Williams III

Mammoth Lakes Sierra: A Handbook for Roadside and Trail by Genny Smith

Wildflowers of the Eastern Sierra and Adjoining Mojave Desert and Great Basin by Laird R. Blackwell

